



ADVISORY ELECTION

WSDOT launches process to set boundaries for advisory vote

Lawmakers created an opportunity for citizens to participate in an advisory election to gauge public support or opposition to tolls on the SR 16/Tacoma Narrows Bridge. The law sets forth a process to involve the public and affected jurisdictions in the creation of the geographic boundary of citizens that would be affected by tolls. Registered voters who live within the final boundary, as set by WSDOT, may cast an advisory ballot at the November 3, 1998 general election.

The proposed boundary was drawn using the results of traffic and economic studies required under state legislation. The law (RCW 47.46) establishes five different criteria for determining who would be affected by tolls on the Tacoma Narrows (see inside).

Based on the legislative criteria, WSDOT set forth key principles in carrying out the studies. The first is that the boundary should be less than the entire state. The second is

that the boundary should include as many of the people who use the bridge as possible. Third, that the boundary should be compact, connected and include communities of interest. The proposed boundary represents about 91 percent of the people who use the bridge and therefore would be impacted if tolls were imposed at the Tacoma Narrows Bridge.

WSDOT's announcement of the proposed boundary begins a public review period. Public meetings are scheduled in communities throughout the affected project area to provide an opportunity for citizens to learn more about the proposed boundary. WSDOT will accept written comments from citizens on the boundary until November 18, 1997. The public comments will be forwarded to a Local Involvement Committee (LIC).

The LIC will be formed to advise WSDOT on the final boundary of the affected

project area. The membership of the LIC will include:

- One elected official of each county and one elected official of each city lying wholly, or in part, within the affected project area. These members will be appointed by their jurisdictions.
- Two persons from each county in the affected project area representing an organization supporting the proposed project and two persons from each county representing organizations opposing the project. These members will be appointed by their county jurisdictions.
- Four public members active in a statewide transportation organization who will be appointed by the Governor.

The LIC duties will include:

- Reviewing the traffic and economic studies used to determine the initial affected project area boundary.



The SR 16/Tacoma Narrows Bridge Corridor is the only roadway link across the Puget Sound connecting Kitsap County and the Olympic Peninsula to the Seattle-Tacoma area.

- Considering the public comments and recommending adjustments to the affected project area.
- Reviewing the project description to be distributed to citizens in preparation for the election.

The ballot title will eventually be prepared by the Attorney General's Office in the same manner that a statewide ballot initiative title is prepared.

Questions and Answers about the Advisory Election on Tacoma Narrows

Why are we voting?

In 1995, petitions with over 5,000 names were submitted to WSDOT demanding a voice in the process to institute tolls on the Tacoma Narrows to pay for improvements. The petitions qualified the project for the advisory election requirements under amendments to the Public Private Initiatives in Transportation Act.

What are we voting on?

The purpose of the advisory election is to gauge public support or opposition to the imposition of tolls or user fees as the method for paying for the new capacity improvements.

The proposed solution to problems on the SR 16/Tacoma Narrows corridor will

WSDOT is seeking public comments on a proposed geographic boundary

The public is invited to a presentation on the proposed boundary at the listed locations. All public comments must be submitted in writing by November 18, 1997. You may submit written comments at the meetings or mail to: Local Involvement Committee, WSDOT, PO Box. 47395, Olympia, WA, 98504-7395. Written comments may also be sent by e-mail to: h78@wsdot.wa.gov. A recorder will be available at the meetings to take any oral comments. For more information, questions, or to arrange a presentation, please call: 1-800-368-2559.

Monday, September 22
Tacoma Area
Stadium High School, Cafeteria
111 North E Street
Tacoma
6-8 p.m.

Tuesday, September 23
Belfair Area
Mary E. Theler Community Center
East 22871; Highway 3
Belfair
6-8 p.m.

Wednesday, September 24
Sequim Area
Sequim High School, Cafeteria
601 North Sequim Avenue
Sequim
6-8 p.m.

Thursday, September 25
Port Townsend Area
Port Townsend High School,
Cafeteria
1500 Van Ness
Port Townsend
6-8 p.m.

Tuesday, September 30
Gig Harbor Area
Goodman Middle School
Common Area
3701 38th Avenue NW
Gig Harbor
6-8 p.m.

Wednesday, October 1
Bremerton Area
Bremerton High School, Library
1500 13th Street
Bremerton
6-8 p.m.

For More Information Call
(800) 368-2559

Mail comments to:
Local Involvement Committee
WSDOT
PO Box 47395
Olympia, WA 98504-7395

e-mail h78@wsdot.wa.gov
fax (360) 664-2770

Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) Information

Individuals requiring reasonable accommodation may request written materials in alternate formats, sign language interpreters, physical accessibility accommodations, or other reasonable accommodation by contacting Kathy Albert at (360) 664-2916. Persons with hearing impairments may call TTY (800) 833-6388 or call collect (360) 664-9009.

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TRAFFIC AND ECONOMIC STUDIES

USED TO PROPOSE VOTING BOUNDARY

WSDOT contracted with a team of consultants led by ECONorthwest to establish a methodology for implementing the law. For each of the criteria established in law, the consulting team developed specific measures and applied those measures to data gathered in the SR 16/Tacoma Narrows Corridor. The proposed methodology was subject to extensive professional and community review.

BOUNDARY CRITERIA 1: CURRENT FACILITY USE

<p>Legal Requirement A comparison of the estimated percentage of the residents of communities in the vicinity of the project and in other communities impacted by the project who could be subject to tolls or user fees and the estimated percentage of other users and transient traffic that could be subject to tolls or user fees. RCW 47.46.030 (5) (a)</p> <p>Criteria Description • Rank order census tracts by the number of trip origins over the tolled facility from most to fewest Proceed down the ranked list adding contiguous</p>	<p>tracts to the affected area until 90% of trip origins is reached. • Calculate the ratio of average daily trips over the tolled facility that originate in a particular census tract to the number of residents in that tract. Proceed down a ranked list adding contiguous tracts to the affected area until 90% of trip origins is reached.</p> <p>Methods In the summer and fall of 1996, video cameras were placed over the four lanes on the west end of the bridge. The video images of license plates were processed</p>	<p>by computers that automatically read the characters on the license plates. Over 250,000 vehicle license plates were read in the summer survey and again in the fall survey. Half a million license plate numbers were then matched to the database maintained by the Washington State Department of Licensing to obtain the addresses where the vehicles were registered. Frequent commuters over the bridge had license plates that registered multiple trips during the study period. The registration address of each license plate read in the video survey was mapped using a computerized</p>	<p>geographic information system. This data provided a detailed picture of the home locations of vehicles using the Tacoma Narrows Bridge.</p> <p>Results The video license survey showed that 40% of the trips over the bridge are made by vehicles registered in Gig Harbor and the rest of northwest Pierce County on the peninsula. Kitsap and Pierce Counties together account for 85% of the trips over the bridge. Using the 90% threshold on the two criteria described above was the major determination in the boundary shown on the map on the opposite page.</p>
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BOUNDARY CRITERIA 2: TRAVEL DIVERSION

<p>Legal Requirement An analysis of the anticipated traffic diversion patterns. RCW 47.46.030 (5) (b)</p> <p>Criteria Description • Any travel analysis zone for which 10% of the home-based trips experience delay on diversion routes that is more than 5 minutes or 10% (whichever is greater) will be included in the affected project area. • Any travel analysis zone with minutes of delay per capita due to diversion that is greater than a threshold level is within the affected area.</p>	<p>Methods An extensive travel analysis using computer simulations showed how the imposition of tolls and the addition of new bridge/highway capacity would affect current and future travel patterns. Using state-of-the-art travel demand models, the consultants evaluated the effects of tolls in a range between \$1.50 and \$3.00 each way and the addition of one new general purpose lane in each direction between Interstate 5 and State Route 302 at Purdy in the years 2005 and 2020. The capacity additions are consistent with either a parallel bridge or double decking the current bridge. The range of tolls evaluated bounds the likely range of tolls that will be charged on the bridge.</p>	<p>The imposition of tolls on the Tacoma Narrows Bridge could induce some travelers to divert their trips to ferries or to travel along Route 3 through Shelton to SR 101. If significant, this diversion would add to congestion along these other routes and the travelers who use these diversion routes would also deserve a say in the advisory election. The analysis of travel diversion involves two countervailing effects. On the one hand, the imposition of tolls makes travel over the Tacoma Narrows Bridge more expensive, thereby creating an incentive for travelers to find an alternative route. On the other hand, the capacity improvements will reduce delay along</p>	<p>SR-16 making it more attractive than alternate routes.</p> <p>Results The travel analysis showed that because of these countervailing effects and the distances required to travel alternative routes, travel diversion is not a determining criterion for establishing the voter boundary. The potential diversion routes through Shelton and on the Southworth, Bremerton and Bainbridge ferries all showed no significant changes in travel volumes or travel times at either the \$1.50 or \$3.00 toll level. This is not to say that no diversion will occur, only that the effects are likely to be small. No additional areas were added to the affected project area under this criterion.</p>
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BOUNDARY CRITERIA 3: ECONOMIC IMPACTS ON FACILITY USERS

<p>Legal Requirement An analysis of the potential economic impact resulting from proposed toll rates or user fee rates imposed on residents, commercial traffic, and commercial entities in communities in the vicinity of and impacted by the project. RCW 47.46.030 (5) (c).</p> <p>Criteria Description Estimate the social costs and benefits of the facility within each zone. Proceed down a list of zones ranked by economic</p>	<p>impact adding contiguous zones to the affected area until 90% of the economic impacts is reached.</p> <p>Methods The travel modeling used in the diversion analysis was also used to estimate the benefits and costs of the proposed project for each census tract in King, Kitsap, and Pierce counties. Integrated travel models are not available for Mason, Thurston, Jefferson and Clallam counties. The</p>	<p>benefits of the project are principally travel time savings of between 1 to 18 minutes during peak periods. The main cost of the project are the tolls that each household must pay to travel over the bridge. Assuming a maximum \$3.00 toll in each direction, the costs and benefits of the project were estimated for each travel analysis zone. These data were used to create a ranked list of census tracts on the basis of total economic impact in each tract.</p>	<p>Results Because the economic analysis relied on travel demand models that cover a smaller area than the video license survey, the resulting affected area was also smaller. Those census tracts that together received over 90% of the economic impacts, fell mostly entirely within the 90% boundary set using the video license data.</p>
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BOUNDARY CRITERIA 4: COST OF GOODS & SERVICES

<p>Legal Requirement An analysis of the economic impact of tolls or user fees on the price of goods and services generally. RCW 47.46.030 (5) (d)</p> <p>Criteria Description Any county with a retail trade sector that would experience increased costs of more than 1.5% due to the toll facility will be included in the affected project area.</p>	<p>Methods The imposition of tolls may increase the costs of transportation for goods and services and thereby raise their cost in a broader geographic area than was effected directly by the tolls themselves. The results of the travel modeling were used to estimate the amount of tolls that commercial vehicles would pay by their county of destination. The total tolls paid by commercial vehicles were then compared to the taxable retail sales in each county.</p>	<p>Results The travel analysis data indicated that commercial vehicles would pay \$11.02 million in tolls annually in 2005 assuming a maximum \$3.00 toll in each direction. Pierce County was the county with the greatest number of commercial trip destinations and therefore the area most likely to have a potential impact due to changes in the cost of goods. Tolls for commercial trips terminating in Pierce County totaled \$7.59 million annually in</p>	<p>2005 which is only 0.124% of the total amount of taxable retail sales in that county. Tolls are an even smaller percentage of the combined value of goods and services in each county. The analysis indicated that the imposition of tolls would not meet the threshold of 1.5% of the cost of goods and services and therefore, no additional geographic areas were included in the affected project area under this criterion.</p>
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BOUNDARY CRITERIA 5: RELATIONSHIP TO STATE NEEDS AND BENEFITS

<p>Legal Requirement An analysis of the relationship of the project to state transportation needs and benefits. RCW 47.46.030 (5) (e)</p> <p>Criteria Description Final boundary should reflect the role of the Tacoma Narrows bridge as an important local and regional transportation facility.</p> <p>Methods The role of the proposed project relative to other state transportation needs and</p>	<p>benefits was analyzed using state planning documents and studies of the SR 16/Tacoma Narrows corridor. The analysis addressed the following topics:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Congestion reduction;• Travel time and vehicle operating cost savings;• Improved operational reliability and user safety;• Potential for expanded high occupancy vehicle (HOV) system connections;• Support for regional transportation strategies and alternative transportation modes;	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Environmental enhancement due to improvements in air quality, mitigation of facility noise impacts, and water quality enhancement associated with improved stormwater management systems;• Economic development impacts, both at the regional and local levels; and• Improved access to national defense facilities. <p>Results The proposed project would meet an important state transportation need and would provide a number of operational,</p>	<p>safety, mobility, economic and environmental benefits. While translating these needs and benefits into lines on a map for purposes of boundary-setting is not possible, the analysis does clearly show that the benefits are both local and regional in nature. The analysis under this criterion supports the findings of the other four criteria, and reinforces the appropriateness of a voting boundary that encompasses a multi-county area.</p>
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Proposed Area for Advisory Election on SR 16/Tacoma Narrows



Schedule For Establishing Advisory Election Boundary

SEPTEMBER	OCTOBER	NOVEMBER	DECEMBER
<ul style="list-style-type: none">WSDOT announces proposed geographic boundary of the initial affected project area and invites jurisdictions to appoint members of the Local Involvement Committee (LIC).Public comment period beginsPublic meetings begin	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Public meetings endFinal LIC appointments made	<ul style="list-style-type: none">First meeting of LICEnd of public comment period (11/18)Second LIC meeting to review public comment and recommend boundary	<ul style="list-style-type: none">WSDOT to establish Advisory Election Boundary

Questions & Answers

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be identified in the Draft Environmental Impact Statement prepared under federal and state environmental laws. This work is underway and is scheduled to be completed by summer, 1998.

When is the election?

The advisory election is scheduled for November 3, 1998 during the state’s regularly scheduled general election. Registered voters will cast their ballots regarding tolls on the SR 16/Tacoma Narrows Bridge at the same time and manner that they vote on their representatives to the U.S. Congress, the state legislature, and local offices.

What happens after the election?

County and state elections officials will certify the election results and transmit them to WSDOT. The Secretary of Transportation will decide if there is sufficient public support to proceed with the financing and construction of the project.

Where can I call to find out if I am inside the proposed boundary?

If you can not determine from the map inside whether you are inside the initial affected project area, contact WSDOT at (800) 368-2559 with your county and precinct number.

I use the Tacoma Narrows Bridge all the time but I live outside the proposed boundary while my friend never uses it and he is inside the boundary. Is that fair?

The preliminary boundary includes areas that generate 91 percent of the trips over the bridge. While some frequent users may be outside the boundary, the large majority of the people who use the bridge regularly will have the opportunity to participate in the advisory election.

What’s wrong with the bridge and what’s being proposed to fix it?

The corridor experiences significant traffic congestion and relatively high accident rates. More than 500,000 hours are lost to delay on the Tacoma Narrows Bridge each year. That delay will increase as the region’s population grows over the next twenty years. WSDOT and its contractor, United Infrastructure Company, are now studying ways to add capacity including a new parallel bridge and double decking the existing bridge.

Where can I learn more about the proposed solutions to addressing problems on the SR-16/Tacoma Narrows Bridge corridor?

Citizens can call 1-888-SOLVE 16 or visit the project’s Web site at: <http://www.wsdot.wa.gov/solve16/>

How can you determine the area that is impacted by tolls if the project is not defined yet?

A Major Investment Study recently completed for SR 16/Tacoma Narrows Corridor recommends three alternatives for study in the Environmental Impact Statement (EIS). Two of the three alternatives were used as the basis for creating a prototypical project for the boundary studies. The toll rates used in these studies were chosen to determine the maximum impact. WSDOT is also examining a “No Build” alternative in the EIS which would not involve tolls and therefore there would be no need for an advisory election.

What will the proposed tolls pay for?

The current estimates for adding a new parallel bridge or double decking the existing bridge and making corridor improvements in the vicinity of Cedar Street in Tacoma to

the vicinity of Purdy are in the range of \$387-\$412 million.

The tolls will pay the cost of the capacity and other related improvements across the SR 16/Tacoma Narrows Bridge. State and Federal funds are being sought for other corridor improvements. Project costs and funding plans will be refined as studies continue.

SEND WRITTEN COMMENTS TO:

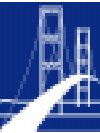
Local Involvement Committee
WSDOT
PO Box 47395
Olympia, WA 98504-7395

Phone (800) 368-2559
e-mail h78@wsdot.wa.gov
fax (360) 664-2770

TITLE VI NOTICE TO THE PUBLIC

WSDOT hereby gives public notice that it is the policy of the department to assure full compliance with Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, the Civil Rights Restoration Act of 1987, and related statutes and regulations in all programs and activities.

Persons wishing information may call the Washington State Department of Transportation, Office of Equal Opportunity at (360) 705-7095.



SR-16/TACOMA NARROWS BRIDGE ADVISORY ELECTION